

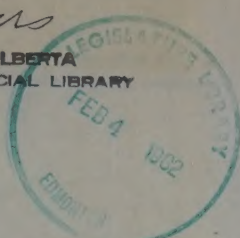
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Precis of Facts on Alberta Forestry.



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PRECIS OF FACTS ON ALBERTA FORESTRY

Value of a tree is usually not sufficiently appreciated. Removal of timber is one of the chief causes of soil erosion. Not less than 20 percent of any farmland should be supporting trees.

Over 10 year period Canada's annual loss from forest fires was over four millions dollars and of this 50 percent was the result of human carelessness. In Alberta in 1949, it is stated, 90 percent was due to that agency.

Throughout its life a tree is under constant attack by insects and continually subject to disease.

Forestry Division of the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests is equipped for protection of forests from fire, pestilence and disease, but prevention is better than any amount of suppression.

ORGANIZATION.

Work of the Dominion Forestry Services was assumed by the Alberta department of lands and mines when the provincial government took over natural resources in 1930, and in due course by the present department of lands and forests.

For purposes of administration the forests are divided into five districts; The Crownsnest, Bow River, Clearwater, and Brazeau-Athabasca Forest Reserves and an area of forest lands known as the Northern Alberta Forest District. Each of these is further divided into ranger districts.

The Cypress Hills Forest Reserve was established in the extreme southeast corner for the protection of a small watershed.

Each forest district or division maintains fire look-out towers equipped with two-way radio or telephone lines linked to headquarters.


Duties of a forest ranger are many and varied. Besides his heaviest duty of fire prevention and / or suppression he interprets the conservation policy to the public. He is also guardian of the fish and furred and feather population of the forests.

In 1949 a contract was entered into with photographic surveyors to photograph and provide base maps of the whole of Alberta not already photographed together with a forest inventory covering 95,000 square miles. This work will be complete by the end of May, 1953.

In the field of research valuable assistance is rendered by the Dominion Department of Agriculture through its prairie regional laboratories at Saskatoon and Calgary.

The most important development of recent years was formation of the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board. The area known as the East Slope stretches from the international border to the north boundary of township 46. It is the board's function to implement the conservation policy and so keep the forests on a self-sustaining basis. It provides measures for insuring the renewal of forests and for management designed to permit the growing and harvesting of perpetual successive crops of forest products.

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COMMERCIAL TIMBER

It is the Alberta government's policy not to sell timberland outright but rather to sell, by tender, rights to cut timber on designated berths. The government derives revenue from royalties, timber area taxes, fire guarding charges, ground rent and such. In 1949 revenue from these sources amounted to \$1,736,837.

In 1949 Alberta forests produced 321,188,216 feet board measure having a gross value to the producer of \$12,847,528.64; 1,124,456 railway ties valued at \$1,518,015.60 and 3,145 cords of pulpwood of a value of \$110,075.

FIRE LOSSES

Forest fire situation in 1949 was the most serious in many years. The season opened on a note of high hazard caused by early hot winds and total absence of rainfall until July. Precipitation after that date was below normal in the north and central portions of Alberta with the result that the fire hazard remained above normal to the end of the season. During that time 323 fires cost Alberta citizens 1,425,730 acres of ground. Over 260,000 acres of merchantable timber were destroyed and more than a million and a half cords of wood. The suppression of these fires, in which the total loss amounted to \$4½ millions, was \$275,681.

INSECT PESTS

Less spectacular than fire but not less destructive are insect pests that prey upon the forests, against which war is not so simple since not so easily spotted. In this branch of conservation Alberta government has co-operation of the Dominion Laboratory of Forest Pathology at Saskatoon and the Dominion Entomological Laboratory at Calgary, the latter with field laboratory at Seebe, Alberta.

Most formidable enemy with which the service has to contend at present is lodgepole pine needle miner which threatens all of the pine stands in the Rocky Mountains. Less serious, but potentially dangerous, is the spruce budworm, American poplar beetle, yellow headed spruce sawfly, pine needle scale and tent caterpillar.

CONSERVATION AND REFORESTATION

Principles of forestry are similar to those of good farming or gardening. Importance of the science is frequently not realized by the farmer accustomed to harvesting his crop or the gardener to gathering his fruits or his flowers every year. Furthermore, where the farm or the garden must be systematically seeded each year not all trees are hand-planted; some broadcast their wind-blown seeds over the cleared land in the process of natural regeneration. Another way in which the forest takes care of itself is by dropping leaves and twigs which, when decomposed, serve as fertilizer.

A tree must be protected all its life against insects, disease and fire. Most fire is man-made either by accident, carelessness or sometimes by wilful destructiveness. When prevention

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of any of these fails and natural regeneration is halted nature has to be helped by planting seedlings in tree nurseries, such as that at Oliver which at present has a capacity of 500,000 trees.

Recognition of these problems was accorded in January, 1948, when the Alberta government withdrew large areas of provincial lands unsuitable for settlement but promising nuclei for forests.

The standard homestead lease contains a clause which requires the settler to retain 20 percent of the timber until he has earned title to the land.

Both the Dominion and provincial governments distribute first trees to farmers on the treeless prairie.

NATIVE ALBERTA TREES

Most important species found in Alberta are white spruce, black spruce, jackpine and lodgepole pine, balsam poplar (blackpoplar), white birch, balsam fir, tamarack (larch), and aspen (white poplar)

In the extreme southwest there is to be found a native fir suitable as hardwood but it is confined to that area. Here and there are a few maples, ash or elm but they are not native to Alberta.

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